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SUBJECT: SUNNI TAWAFUQ VOICES FRUSTRATION WITH GOI, CALLS
FOR WITHDRAWAL

Classified By: Acting DCM Margaret Scobey, for reasons 1.4 b and d

¶1. (C) Summary: Statements by the Sunni Tawafuq bloc in recent weeks have indicated it is considering withdrawing from Iraq's national unity government due to its perception Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki is not responding in a meaningful way to Sunni concerns. These concerns include their strong interest in replacing Tawafuq Minister of Defense Abdalkader; a series of raids on the homes and offices of prominent Sunni political and religious figures, and what Tawafuq members call a lack of policy coordination that leads to the exclusion of Sunnis from decisionmaking. At this juncture, these calls may be more an expression of frustration than an actual plan to withdrawal, and the Sunnis appear open negotiation. PM Maliki's public statement asking for suggestions to replace the DefMin may signal a willingness to enter a dialogue. Movement forward on key issues such as constitutional review, de-Ba'athification legislation, and provincial council elections could also address some of Tawafuq's core concerns. It appears Tawafuq may seek to delay passage of hydrocarbons legislation until there is progress on the bloc's political priorities. End Summary.

¶2. (C) Since early April, Tawafuq contacts have been signaling both publicly and privately that the Sunni bloc is considering withdrawal from the government. Bloc leader Adnan Dulaimi announced April 7 that Tawafuq had withdrawn from the Ministerial Council for National Security (MCNS). (Note: This announcement was largely seen as symbolic because long before Dulaimi's statement Tawafuq representatives were rarely seen at MCNS meetings. Sunni contacts had repeatedly told post they saw MCNS as largely ineffective. End Note). IIP spokesman Saleem Jabbouri told the media again on April 9 that Tawafuq "was considering a withdrawal" from the government, because the bloc's participation had achieved few positive results. Vice President Tariq al Hasimin told the Ambassador April 16 the bloc was "seriously considering withdrawal" because the Sunnis were achieving little in the national unity government. (ref)

SEEKING A ROLE ON SECURITY

¶3. (C) At the top of Tawafuq's list of complaints is its lack of influence on Iraq's security ministries. Tawafuq contacts universally express dissatisfaction with MoD Abdalkader's performance. While he is well spoken, a good officer, and works well with MNF-I, they argue, in their view he does not operate as an objective representative of or advocate for Sunni security needs. However, they argue, Itilaf has access to and influence on the rest of Iraq's security ministers, up to Commander in Chief PM Maliki. Conversely, Tawafuq bloc leaders have argued, if the choice for MoD is truly the prerogative of Tawafuq, then the bloc should be able to name Abdalkader's replacement. The PM's

firm stance of support for MoD has driven Tawafuq's refusal to participate in cabinet reshuffle discussions and has become one of the many roadblocks in the way of needed ministerial changes.

¶4. (C) IIP contacts have also complained that although they participated in popular mobilization and intelligence gathering for the Baghdad Security Plan (BSP) in good faith, they were not included in the decision making process with regard to operations and targets. In fact, according to Tawafuq contacts, in March and April a total of twenty homes and offices of senior Tawafuq leaders were the target of Iraqi Army cordon and search operations. These operations included the red zone residence of prominent figures such as Sunni Vice President Tariq Al-Hashimi, Tawafuq bloc leader Adnan Dulaimi, and Sunni Endowment head Abdalghafour Al-Sammaraie, and were carried out without MNF-I participation. Dozens of Tawafuq CoR members' personal security details were reportedly taken into ISF custody; the whereabouts of a number of them remain unknown. Still others were reportedly subject to physical torture, with a view toward extracting confessions of wrong-doing by their employers. Tawafuq members claim that IA soldiers behaved in an extremely unprofessional manner as they carried out the raids, cursing Sunnis in some cases, destroying and/or stealing property, and money.

¶5. (C) Many of these raids were followed almost immediately by an AQI attack, Tawafuq contacts observed, pointing to the example of the AQI truck bomb that destroyed the IIP's Baghdadiyah TV station April 5, just days after IA took away most of its weapons and arrested several guards protecting

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the facility. (Note: The station has not yet begun to re-broadcast since the attack. End note.)

CONCERNS OF CRIMINAL PROSECUTION, LOSS OF IMMUNITY

¶6. (C) After months of rumors surrounding a possible warrant for the arrest of 77-year old Tawafuq bloc leader Adnan Dulaimi, the Higher Juridical Council on April 15 delivered a "thick file" on Dulaimi which contained testimonies from approximately eighty Iraqis complaining of harassment by Dulaimi's bodyguards, mostly under orders from his son Monqith. Sadrist Legal Committee Chair Baha Al-Ariji announced to the media that the file had in fact been received by the CoR and would be "closely scrutinized." Deputy Legal Chair Saleem Al-Jabbouri (Tawafuq) told poloff April 18 that the politicization of the issue cast doubt on the legitimacy of the entire case. He observed that most of the signed testimony did not implicate Dulaimi himself but rather his staff or his children; moreover, many of the testimonies appeared to have been written and signed at the offices of leading SCIRI CoR member Jalal Eddin Al Sagheer. Dulaimi claimed that members of his personal security detail, who were arrested in December, were tortured for confessions implicating him and his family in crimes.

¶7. (C) Jabbouri questioned why Adnan Dulaimi, who has lived in the same neighborhood for thirty-five years, has all of a sudden become such a threat to its residents. Jabbouri noted that there were two other requests for lifting of parliamentary immunity before the Legal Committee, one for Iraqiya CoR Member Mufeed Al Jazairy (former Culture Minister) and Sadrist Salam Al Maliki (former Transportation minister) in connection to corruption charges, but this fact had not been publicized in the media in the same fashion. In the meantime, leaders such as Dulaimi, Abdalnasr Al Janabi, Saleh Motloq and National Dialogue Council (NDC) head Khalaf Ulayan also remain outside

Iraq because they fear politicized prosecution or for their personal safety. Mohamed Tamim from Hewan told poloff this growing phenomenon is not a good sign for Sunni participation in government nor does it bode well for national reconciliation.

PRESSING FOR FASTER PROGRESS ON RECONCILIATION

¶8. (C) Tawafuq acknowledges that its access to the PM has increased. Senior IIP members Ayad Sammaraie and Naseer Al-Ani meet with him regularly for talks on Tawafuq concerns with the GOI. However, contacts argue, this has not lead to forward movement on the deliverables of national reconciliation - another frustration of the Sunnis. A major component of the PM's reconciliation plan was a commitment to reviewing the status of Iraqis who worked at the 28 "entities" dissolved under CPA Order 1, with a view to re-integrating them into society - either through re-employment, recruitment to the ISF, transfer to pension rolls, or other compensation. Naseer Al-Ani, high ranking Tawafuq member and Deputy Chair of the National Reconciliation Commission has frequently complained to poloffs that the Dissolved Entities Bureau, an office established under PM Jaafari to oversee this re-integration process, is a "bureaucratic hole" where requests for service disappear. In the absence of GOI movement to address this concern, Sunni political figures have argued, the insurgency strengthened and thousands of qualified Iraqis left the country.

¶9. (C) Al-Ani recently told poloffs that the the questionnaire distributed to former officers had been edited; the new and improved questionnaire did not have "provocative questions" seeking information on sect, political party affiliation, and other "unnecessary information". Further, PM had taken measures to minimize the role of the Bureau in order to process cases faster, and that some officers have even begun to receive pensions. Al-Ani, who has been working closely with Da'awa insider and PM confidante Falah Fayad on pensions, says he hopes to tackle a mass education campaign on the De-Ba'athification law next - but will need GOI support.

¶10. (C) While the PM has expressed concern over the possibility of a Sunni withdrawal from government, it is not clear what actual concessions he is prepared to make with regard to the "security policy coordination" the Sunnis are demanding. According to Iraqi media, the PM recently issued a statement calling for Tawafuq to suggest replacements for Abdalkader, a possible signal he is interested in dialogue to

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stave off the bloc's withdrawal.

COMMENT: WHAT WOULD SUNNI WITHDRAWAL MEAN?

¶11. (C) Few of our contacts foresee a full-fledged Tawafuq withdrawal, at least in the short to mid-term. Rather the bloc will use the threat to press for progress on key areas of Sunni concern. Speaker Mashadani indicated to PolCouns April 19 that any Tawafuq withdrawal would be "tactical, not strategic," meaning that the bloc would use the doubts about its commitment to the government as a means to achieve concessions. To this end, Mashadani and other Tawafuq contacts have indicated they will push for the successful completion of constitutional review, passage of compromise De-Baathification legislation and an elections law. Some have said they may even withhold support for pending hydrocarbons legislation, a higher priority for Shia and Kurds, in order to achieve these objectives. If a "withdrawal" were to take place, it would most likely

resemble Tawafuq's October boycott of CoR sessions which they used to push the CoR to name the Constitutional Review Committee alongside passage of the Law on Regions.

¶12. (C) No Sunni contact has been able to articulate what a Tawafuq withdrawal would look like. However, if it were actually pursued, it would clearly be a blow both to reconciliation and to the legitimacy of the national unity government. The GOI could theoretically continue functioning with a working majority, but the withdrawal would sever the fledgling relationships between Sunni, Shia, and Kurdish GOI ministers, staff, and CoR members. While Tawafuq as a whole is disorganized and often appears to be dysfunctional, among the Sunnis there are many capable operators; in fact some of the Embassy's most proactive interlocutors on the Legal, Financial, and Constitutional Review Committees at the CoR are from Tawafuq.

¶13. (C) On a broader level, a Tawafuq full withdrawal would make it all the more difficult for any emerging and relatively inexperienced Sunnis political groupings to enter the GOI. Furthermore, those Sunnis who have been sitting on the fence waiting for results from their representatives in government could lose hope in the prospects for a democratic Iraq entirely; they might leave the country or lend their sympathies to the insurgency, or worse, AQI.

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